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By CB Date 04/09/02EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tehran, Iran

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March 1, 1972

3/1/72

Jack C. Miklos, Esquire
Director for Iranian Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Dear Jack:

As I mentioned to you on the phone last night (or was it this morning) I was summoned back this morning by General Azimi, the Minister of War, for a report on the status of HIM's request for a squadron of F-4Es in 1972. Believe it or not, I think the General probably hoped to have an answer to the request, put to us most recently last week. A telegram will be on its way to you today reporting on the conversation. The purpose of this is to give you some of the atmospherics.

Clearly, this question of F-4Es in 1972 is now uppermost in the Shah's mind and has become Problem No. 1 with us. He sees this as an article of faith in his concept of his relationship with the US, feeling that when the chips are down and his need is great we will cooperate with him and be responsive -- even though we may disagree with his assumptions, conclusions and needs.

In the absence of any clear state of play on the F-4E production line in 1972 and future years, i.e., how many are going to the USAF and to other countries, the line I have taken with the General is that since Iran's own production schedule can't be speeded up and the company can only find 11 F-4Es out of its own production for delivery in early 1973 but not before, the only way we can respond to the Shah's request is to take these planes from some other country or out of our own hide. This raises many

DEF 12-5 years

(signed) Doug
Douglas Heck

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problems regarding priorities, relations with other countries, etc. Therefore, in order to strengthen the case it is of vital importance that there be no professional doubt about Iran's capacity to absorb this squadron in 1972, and as of now both Armish/Maag and General Khatemi of the IIAF have such doubts.


This has gotten pretty bloody because General Azimi stated flatly last week to me and repeated again today that it was his professional judgment that this could be done, and he was unaware of any reservations by Armish/Maag or General Khatemi. Unfortunately, the good General has not been clued in and is out on a limb, but as a result of this morning's meeting at which I persuaded him to review the matter I hope this can be straightened out.

Whatever the result of this review, the fact remains that the Shah has officially asked us for a squadron in 1972 and that is the reality we must address. I suspect that because of his concerns about production lines and other delays the Shah would prefer to have a squadron here in storage than promised later on.

Incidentally, and as an indication of how closely the Shah is following this -- as he always does -- he picked up a comment I had made last week which was in a report to him to the effect that the recent loss of two F-4s and one F-5 because of reported pilot error indicated what could happen if the Air Force was pushed too hard, and this morning the General said the Shah had directed him to tell me that the IIAF's record was outstanding and a lot better than both the USAF and the German Air Force, and in effect to knock it off.

One occasionally picks up a bruise or two around here representing our interests.

There is little doubt in my mind that if matters are delayed that long the Shah will get a favorable response in May, but I would hope that we could avoid all the bruises, bitterness and anguish that such a delay would entail.



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At a minimum I would hope that I could be instructed very soon to tell the GOI that in principle we accept the Shah's request for a squadron in 1972, and we are actively engaged in seeing how we can be responsive.

Good luck.

Sincerely,



Douglas Heck